

Introduction

The tradition continues. Year Group (YG) 2002 became the latest participants to be inducted into the Competitive Development Group (CDG) Program during the annual CDG orientation hosted by the Acquisition Career Management Office (ACMO) and held Aug. 21-22, 2001, in Springfield, VA. In addition, a commencement ceremony was held honoring YG98 graduates.

As in years past, this orientation provided new members an opportunity to learn how participation in the CDG Program can help make them more competitive, broaden their perspectives, and increase their professionalism. In addition, it provided members of all year groups the opportunity to hear from colleagues firsthand about their individual experiences in the CDG Program.

The following 20 individuals in YG02 were inaugurated into the 3-year career development program: Janet Ballard, Sam Collier, Mark Cryderman, Barbara Falling, Daniel Featherston, Janet Fletcher, Eric Goodman, Kenneth Hiltunen, Janice Isbell, Thuan Khong, Abraham Kim, Jacquelyn Kowallik, Mark McCoy, Gary McPherson, Marvin Nichols, Ray Sellers, Millie Smith, John Traylor, Robert Voltz, and Roger Yocom. Highlights from the orientation follow.

Opening Remarks

CDG Manager Maria Holmes opened the orientation by congratulating YG02 members. Being a CDG member, she said, is not a right but a privilege. She introduced COL Frank C. Davis III, then ACMO Director and Deputy Director for Acquisition Career Management, for welcoming comments. (Davis is scheduled to retire Jan 31, 2002.) Davis shared some of his perceptions about the program. He said this is an excellent time to enter the CDG Program because during the next 4-5 years, the acquisition workforce will lose a tremendous number of senior managers to attrition. There will be

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CDG ORIENTATION HELD FOR YG02

Sandra R. Marks

opportunities for eye-opening training experiences at sites such as the National Training Center, and CDG participants will be able to witness current initiatives such as the Army transformation.

Davis was followed by Larry Israel, Chief, Personnel Management Division at the Army Acquisition Executive Support Agency (AAESA); and LTC Thomas Hogan, Chief, U.S. Total Army Personnel Command's Acquisition Management Branch, for briefings about their agencies. Israel outlined AAESA's mission statement, strategic plan, and organizational structure, and gave insight on what functions the agency performs to assist CDG members. Hogan's focus

was on the kinds of support his agency provides CDG members. He highlighted areas such as career management counseling, board application review and scrub, and Individual Development Plan (IDP) assistance.

Other AAESA personnel gave a presentation on personnel actions, travel, and permanent change of station (PCS) status. Carolyn D. Creamer, Human Relations Specialist in AAESA's Personnel Management Division, addressed issues such as support provided by both the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center and the Civilian Personnel Operations Center, requests for personnel action, timekeeping, locator cards, and



YG02 CDG inductees are shown with COL Frank C. Davis III, who is on the far left, and LTG(P) Paul J. Kern (now with his fourth star), who is on the far right.

awards. Junius Wright, Budget Officer, and Mary Sutton, Budget Analyst, both from AAESA's Resource Management (RM) Division, highlighted the numerous functions that the RM Division performs as the ACMO's business office. They emphasized that the RM Division provides resource support for the CDG Program by advising the ACMO on funding issues and processing all fund certifications for travel orders and training.

Regional Directors' Briefing

New to this year's orientation was a briefing by each of the three regional directors: Sandra Long, Regional Director for the National Capital, Central, and OCONUS regions; Maxine H. Maples, Regional Director for the Southern and Western regions; and Kelly L. Terry, Regional Director for the Northeast and Central regions. Their purpose was to profile key points of contact and summarize ongoing regional programs and initiatives within their customer support offices. In addition, Long, Maples, and Terry emphasized their role and the importance of Acquisition Career Management Advocates to the CDG Program in providing advice and guidance and identifying and approving developmental assignments.

Sharing CDG Experiences

YG01 member David Duda and YG98 graduates Samuel Jones and Amelia Hatchett took the podium to



Larry Israel

share some of their CDG experiences. Duda discussed his Training With Industry assignment with the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA). He outlined AIA's organizational structure and the working relationships established between AIA and other federal agencies, and he discussed some of AIA's ongoing initiatives. Duda concluded with a summary of the assignments he piloted during the 1-year program.

Samuel Jones, Product Manager (PM), Combat Training Instrumentation Systems, highlighted what he views as necessary for selection to a PM position and what the key attributes are for success as a PM. Jones emphasized the need to be flexible when accepting developmental assignments and the need to obtain an advanced degree as key enablers to PM selection. In addition, he sug-



Luncheon speaker Pamela Creek

gested that one maintain a well-developed Acquisition Career Record Brief and not underestimate the value of a Senior Rater Potential Evaluation. Jones credits his success as a PM to being visible and being able to manage funding, connect to the warfighter, document activities, control e-mail, challenge the status quo, reward people, and think positively.

Amelia Hatchett, YG98, discussed her promotion experience and what aided her career advancement. She underscored the importance of staying focused on one's career path. That career path, she added, should include formal training, training to complete your IDP, career training in both your core area and related areas, long-term training opportunities, and developmental assignments. Career advancement, Hatchett said, is a combination of personal, technical, and social expertise, as well as one's skill set. Among the career essentials Hatchett advocates are having the proper attitude, maintaining networks, working well with others, having good work habits, holding high ethical standards, being aware of unwritten rules, having technical competence, involving management, and establishing a good management style and reputation. She urged newcomers to take on the challenge of new assignments and to step out and ask for work.



YG98 CDG graduates are shown with COL Frank C. Davis III, who is on the far left.

Panel Discussion

COL Davis led a group comprised of five YG98 graduates and a current YG01 member in a discussion of current issues relevant to the CDG Program. Panelists were YG01 member David Duda and YG98 graduates Doug Packard, Amelia Hatchett, Samuel Jones, and Kevin Maisel. YG98 graduate Maria Holmes served as moderator. The panel fielded questions from the audience. Topics included what options were available to those experiencing a less-than-fulfilling developmental assignment, sponsors and mentors, Contribution-based Compensation and Appraisal System (CCAS) forms and current guidance on pay pools and awards, and CDG demographic profiling and selection rates. In addition, the panel broached the subject of the newly mandated policy that will require all CDG members, starting with YG03, to apply to a PM Board.

Working Lunch

Pamela Creek, who served as Director of Human Resources for the Defense Logistics Agency before her retirement from federal government service in 2000, presented a briefing titled "The Leadership Journey—The Importance and Value of Leadership in the Public Service." Creek used information she gathered from a number of key individuals in the field of leadership development and interviews with current and retired Senior Executive Service (SES) members to assess leadership and management today. Creek focused on what author and leadership guru Warren Bennis has stated is "the crisis of leadership in our institutions and government today." Creek says we are not adequately developing people to take on leadership positions vacated predominantly by attrition. In these times of "choice, chaos, and change," Creek says we need people of character and capability who can lead change. She proposes several prerequisites to develop leaders: accepting challenging assignments, enduring

hardships, and learning from others. Creek views the CDG Program as a wonderful opportunity to have a full range of experiences that will prepare one for future leadership positions. What someone gains from the CDG Program, Creek says, depends on the individual. She urged CDG members to take full advantage of opportunities presented them.

AcqDemo Project Training

A training session on the DOD Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration (AcqDemo) Project was conducted to help familiarize YG02 members with its various components. Jerry Lee, a Senior Analyst with Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC), who supports the ACMO relative to implementation of the AcqDemo project, was assisted by three fellow SAIC employees who also support the ACMO implementation of the demo project: Jael Latham, Analyst, also based in the ACMO; and Program Analyst Andy Bacon and Senior Analyst Darryl R. Burgan, both based in the DOD Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project Office. They discussed topics such as transitioning into and converting out of the AcqDemo Project; understanding CCAS, the evaluation system used in the demo project; assessments; and pay pools. Ample time was allotted to answer questions from the YG02 members, many of whom were being exposed to the AcqDemo Project for the first time.

YG02 Induction

"You represent the future of our acquisition career force," guest speaker LTG(P) Paul J. Kern said as he congratulated YG02 members on their induction into the program during a dinner in their honor. (At the time of the orientation, Kern was the Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology and Army Acquisition Corps Director. He now has his fourth star and is Command-

ing General, Army Materiel Command.) Kern addressed the challenges that lie ahead in supporting the pace of technology as the Army moves forward in the 21st century. "We have a real need today for all of you," he added. The emergence of new concepts, the uncertainty of how we're going to use the equipment, and creating policies to support this equipment will test the future acquisition workforce, Kern said. Recruiting was another important topic Kern addressed. It will be imperative, Kern said, that we have a group of people capable and prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

YG98 Graduation

The CDG orientation culminated with Mary Thomas, a former Deputy Director of the ACMO, addressing YG98 graduates at a ceremonious dinner honoring their completion of the 3-year program. The theme was "Facing The Future From Within," and Thomas spoke about having the courage to take risks and face possible failure in our constantly changing and competitive environment. We're not always going to meet expectations, Thomas reminds us, and it's through failure that we learn about our strengths and weaknesses. She added that it is important to take advantage of opportunities that will help us grow and strengthen our skills. Thomas talked about having passion for one's job. If you find something you care about and that makes you happy, Thomas says, it's so much more worthwhile. Even after the CDG Program, Thomas says, taking advantage of opportunities will help you find those things that really help you succeed.

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